Department of Justice
Policing and Victim Services

BUSINESS PLAN 2004-2005

106-05411/

1. The Creation of a New Division

The Policing and Victim Services Division was created in 2001 by joining the former Divisions: Policing and Public Safety Services and Victims' Services.

The new Division brings together separate disciplines, units that are unique in their business goals and operational functioning. It is anticipated that the efficiency and synergy created by linking these entities under the umbrella of the Policing and Victim Services Division will generate new opportunities for integration and growth.

2. Mission

The Policing and Victim Services Division is committed to the advancement of public safety and reduction of the effects of crime on victims.

3. Planning Context

The Business Plan is a dynamic document, that is assessed and revised on an ongoing basis to ensure that it is meeting the priorities established by government. The government's priorities serve as a blueprint for departmental Business Plans and are the foundation of the budget planning process. These priorities are:

1. Building Greater Prosperity
2. Health Care - better, faster health care and healthier Nova Scotians
3. Learning is Succeeding
4. Fiscal Responsibility and Accountability
5. Protecting What Nova Scotians Value:
    - Seniors
    - Families and Nova Scotians in Need
    - Environment
    - Cultural Diversity
    - Consumer Protection / Insurance
    - Safer Communities / Streets

The Vision Statement of the Department of Justice guides its daily operations. It states:

Nova Scotia is a place where people and their rights are respected. We will provide leadership in partnership with others to build a Province where:

- citizens trust the justice system
- people are and feel safe and secure
- disputes are effectively and sensitively resolved
- access to justice processes are timely and affordable
- communities actively participate in the justice system
- diversity is valued and respected

The Policing and Victim Services planning process is further steered by the Department of Justice's four strategic goals:

- Improve public safety and security;
- Reduce the harmful impact of crime on victims;
- Improve access to justice;
- Promote the lawful administration of public affairs.

Challenges

The establishment of the new Division has occurred within an environment of distinctive challenges and opportunities both for those who provide oversight and governance in relation to public policing and private security and for those responsible for developing and implementing policies and programs to address the concerns of victims of crime in the criminal justice system. Fundamental organizational and structural changes in policing (e.g., growth in the private security industry) have resulted from factors such as changes in the law, fiscal restraint, demographic shifts, greater public scrutiny, increasing globalization, and rapidly advancing technology[1]. While increasing recognition of the needs and concerns of victims of crime has resulted in the development of policy, program, and legislative rights for victims of crime in Canada the demand for increased services and to further integrate victims into the criminal justice system continues to grow[2].

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[1] Smith, Paul. (2002) *Issues and Trends in Policing*. Nova Scotia Department of Justice.

[2] Cohen, Shaughnessy. (1998, October) *Victims' Rights - A Voice, Note a Veto*. Report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

4. Vision Statement

Nova Scotia is a place where people feel safe and secure in their communities and where victims of crime trust the criminal justice process.

5. Core Business Areas

The Policing and Victim Services Division has responsibility for the following core business areas:

Oversight, governance and advice to police and private security services

- providing an advisory role to all police services and managing contracts with the RCMP and First Nations Policing;
- improving public accountability of policing through improved governance;
- strengthening policing initiatives through development of standards and training in partnership with stakeholders;
- licensing companies and individuals engaged in the private security industry;
- working with communities to develop and implement crime prevention programs.

Administration of the licensing provisions of the federal Firearms Act

- licensing of firearms owners/businesses;
- monitoring of continuous eligibility of firearms owners;
- designation/inspection of firing ranges;
- authorization to transfer/transport firearms;
- delivery of firearms safety courses.

Provision of assistance to victims of crime

- working with justice partners and the community to develop and implement policies and programs for victims of crime that address their needs;
- providing direct services to victims through four core programs: the Regional Victim Services Program, the Criminal Injuries Counselling Program, the Victim Impact Statement Program, and the Child Victim Witness Program.

6. Priorities for 2004-2005

In 2004-2005 the Policing and Victim Services Division will focus on four key strategic areas:

- Communication
- Human Resources
- Client Service
- Legislative Initiatives

The Division will:

G undertake the development of a strategic plan, to set direction for the next five years and develop an action plan for achieving objectives
G foster a workplace that utilizes employees' skills and interests, promotes workplace interest, and encourages continuous learning
G develop a client service value statement, and examine opportunities for service coordination

Oversight, governance and advice to police and private security services

G prepare for consideration by government a new *Police Act* and regulations to reflect current policing practices and standards
G review our public safety consultative role in the development of a client service value statement
G work in support of the Road Safety Advisory Committee, Alcohol Countermeasures Subcommittee, led by Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations to adopt new anti-drunk driving measures such as more sobriety check points
G work with the federal government, RCMP and local law enforcement agencies to protect public safety in the face of new terrorist threats
G support the federal government in implementing a national sex offender registry
G implement new private security licensing software
G prepare for consideration by government new legislation to regulate the private security industry and consult with stakeholders

Administration of the licensing provisions of the federal Firearms Act

- G review continuous eligibility concerns of firearms license holders according to service delivery standards
- G enhance public information regarding the role of the Provincial Firearms office
- G measure the effectiveness of policy/procedure to share information between the Firearms office and Victim Services in cases of high risk domestic violence

Provision of assistance to victims of crime

- G collaborate with partners to develop regional protocols for responding to high risk cases of domestic violence
- G provide support for victims of crime, including exploring additional measures to force criminals to provide restitution
- G develop efficiencies to support the Domestic Violence Case Coordination Program
- G analyze the results of the Child Victim Witness Program Closure Questionnaire findings to determine areas of continued improvement for child victim witnesses within the criminal justice system